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# Senator Dianne Feinstein

of California

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## Senators John Warner, Mike DeWine, and Lincoln Chafee Join Feinstein and Schumer in Effort to Renew Assault Weapons Ban

*-- Fraternal Order of Police Also Announce Support for Renewing the Ban --*  
February 24, 2004

**Washington, DC** – U.S. Senators John W. Warner (R-VA), Mike DeWine (R-OH), and Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) today announced that they would join Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Charles Schumer (D-NY) in supporting the reauthorization of the federal assault weapons ban, providing needed support for the effort.

The senators introduced legislation today that would extend the current ban on military-style assault weapons for another 10 years. Unless Congress acts, the ban will expire on September 13, 2004. The legislation is also cosponsored by Senators Carl Levin (D-MI), Christopher Dodd (D-CT), James Jeffords (I-VT), Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Jack Reed (D-RI), and Hillary Clinton (D-NY).

At the same time, the effort to renew the ban got an additional boost from a key law enforcement organization – the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), which has more than 310,000 members in more than 2,100 lodges. The effort to renew the ban already has the support of several major law enforcement organizations including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major City Chiefs, the National Association of Police Organizations, the National Organization of Black Police Officials, the International Brotherhood of Police Officers, the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association, and the American Probation and Parole Association.

**“The reauthorization of the assault weapons ban today was endorsed by several key Republican senators, including Senator John Warner, and the Fraternal Order of Police, the world’s largest organization of sworn law enforcement officers,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“This gives the effort to renew the assault weapons ban new momentum.”**

**“The assault weapons ban has always enjoyed broad support among voters. Today’s announcements, however, demonstrate that the ban also has strong, bipartisan support in the Senate and broad support in the law enforcement community. I especially want to thank Senator Warner, who voted against the assault weapons ban in 1994, but has come to realize its importance. This decision shows courage and a deep commitment to keeping America’s streets safe.”**

**“Although I voted against the ban a decade ago, over the past ten years, it has reduced crime dramatically and has made our streets safer,”** Senator Warner said. **“The legislation also**

**has protected the rights of gun owners better than many of us predicted. I'm pleased to join President Bush in supporting a reasonable extension of this important law.”**

**“The assault weapon ban has been one of the main reasons why we were able to reduce crime so dramatically over the last decade, which is why Democrats and Republicans are backing its renewal,” Senator Schumer said. “The fact of the matter is that there is no legitimate use for these weapons. That was as true in 1994 as it is today. The assault weapon ban has been in effect for nearly a decade, and not one hunter has lost his right to hunt, not one homeowner has lost his power to defend his home. We have proven that the Second Amendment can thrive while we take limited and reasonable measures to protect Americans from gun violence.”**

The assault weapons ban has proven to be effective since it was enacted. In fact, the proportion of banned assault weapons traced to crimes has dropped by 65.8% since 1995, according to data from the Department of Justice. In 1995, the first year that the ban went into effect, assault weapons represented 3.57 percent of all crime guns recovered from crimes. By 2002, assault weapons represented only 1.22 percent of the number of guns used in crimes.

**“This data shows clearly that the assault weapons ban is working,” Senator Feinstein said. “From the moment the law went into effect there has been a steady and dramatic decline in the number of banned weapons turning up in crimes. Based on this evidence, it is clear to me that the assault weapons ban needs to be reauthorized so that we can continue to keep these military-style weapons off the street.”**

The legislation would reauthorize the 1994 assault weapons ban for an additional 10 years. This would:

- **Maintain the ban on the manufacture and importation of 19 types of common military style assault weapons;**
- **Maintain the ban on an additional group of assault weapons that have been banned by characteristic;**
- **Continue to protect some 670 hunting and other recreational rifles for use by law-abiding citizens; and**
- **Preserve the right of police officers and other law enforcement officials to use and obtain newly manufactured semi-automatic assault weapons -- helping to prevent instances when law enforcement agents are outgunned by perpetrators.**

Although the assault weapons ban remains controversial in Congress, it is widely supported by gun owning and non-gun owning voters. According to an October poll (sample size – 800) conducted for Americans for Gun Safety by Mark Penn, voters support renewing the ban by a margin of 77-21% (66-32% among voters who own guns).

Reauthorizing the assault weapons ban is supported by:

- Fraternal Order of Police
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- Major City Chiefs
- National Association of Police Organizations
- National Organization of Black Police Officials
- International Brotherhood of Police Officers
- Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association

- American Probation and Parole Association
- National League of Cities
- US Conference of Mayors
- National Association of Counties
- US Conference of Catholic Bishops
- National Education Association
- American Bar Association
- NAACP
- Americans for Gun Safety
- Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence United with the Million Mom March
- Church Women United
- Episcopal Church, USA
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Public Health Association
- Family Violence Prevention Fund
- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- National Network to End Domestic Violence
- National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
- National Association of Social Workers
- Physicians for A Violence Free Society
- American Association of Suicidology
- Mothers Against Violence in America
- Child Welfare League of America
- Alliance for Justice

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